

## Cookie Rubric Activity

### Notes to Facilitator:

When I've done this activity, I have not given the participants the cookies until after they develop their rubrics, which I describe as rating systems for those folks who still don't use rubrics. Of course, there are many adaptations --- and directions that the activity may take. Each time I've used it, though, the discussions and learnings have been rich. I even use it with kids. They love the fact they can eat the cookies, of course! (Remember to have paper toweling or napkins available. Maybe coffee and milk, too.)

### The steps I've used:

1. Ask the participants to list the characteristics of a top-quality chocolate chip cookie. They brainstorm what it would look like, taste like, feel like, etc. You can have them share their features so each can benefit from the listings of others.
2. Ask the teachers to categorize their lists of features.
3. Ask them to use these categories and the descriptors they included for each category to build a rubric or rating system they could use to evaluate a variety of chocolate chip cookies.
4. Once they have their rubrics / rating systems designed, then give them at least five sample cookies to use. Try to have a mixture of cookies, some of which may not easily fit into their rubrics since one point that you'll want to discuss is the "outliers" that sometimes enter into the picture when we score performances. For example, I might have a selection such as this: one homemade or bakery quality cookie, one "soft batch" cookie, one cookie with oatmeal or raisins or nuts added, one cookie that is very crunchy, one that has peanut butter or butterscotch flavoring, and such. You get the picture. The aim is to have a variety they can use to "test" the rubric they designed. (Hint: If you bag these before the presentation, it helps with the timing. Then all you have to do is give each person a bag filled with various cookies.)
5. Using the sample cookies, ask the teachers to "test" their rubrics. They rate each cookie using their own rubric.
6. From there, you can go many places. You can talk about the effectiveness of the rubrics they designed. You can look at the variety of rubrics. Do some rubrics have detailed descriptors within cells? Are some based on numbers? You can talk about what they did with those unexpected features of the cookies such as peanut butter or raisins. You can talk about how they allowed for those "effort" sort of features such as being homemade. You can also ask them to talk about how they would use their own rubrics to develop grades for the cookies. Would they use analytic scores or holistic scores? Would they weight some features more heavily than others?

*This activity is a wonderful way to introduce the topics of rubrics and assessing performances. It gives the participants a hands-on experience to draw from as they discuss the issues and difficulties inherent in performance assessment.*